



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 on Tuesday, October 10, 2017 at 6 p.m.

**PRC MINUTES
October 10, 2017**

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Elaine Powell, Chair
Heidi Pruess – Vice Chair
Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary
Sterling Martin
Brian Cox
Rick Winiker
Peter Engels
John Leonard
Blanche Penn
Doug Burnett
Mary Foxx Johnson

PRC Absent:

Northern Towns – Vacant Position
Marc Seelinger

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Powell welcomed all to the October 10, 2017 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. A special welcome was extended to **Blanche Penn**, newly appointed PRC for North Region 3. Blanche is a retired employee of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. All commissioners introduced themselves, shared the region they represented and the advisory councils on which they serve. Each commissioner also shared how they hoped to make a difference by serving on the Park and Recreation Commission.

Public Appearance: None

Proclamations, Awards and Recognitions - None

Staff Presentations:

Program Presentation – Community and Recreation Center Services – Terri Stowers

Vision for Community and Recreation Center Services: Terri Stowers, Director of Community and Recreation Center Services shared a presentation in the “Pecha Kucha” style, which she will be making to all her staff at the first quarter check-in. The presentation was an overview of the CRCS Division’s vision and covered the following:

- Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department Vision Statement
 - How to satisfy the needs of a million plus people
- Aquatics
 - Focus on water safety. Go into the schools and talk to kids about water safety. Recruit and train lifeguards.
- Cooperative Extension
 - Focus on career pathways with 4-H kids. Sustainable Living series. Master Food volunteers to teach non-farmers how to be farmers and how to preserve food.
- Recreation Centers
 - Convert to learning labs, working with IT to make centers into actual satellite libraries. Connecting Kids to Nature, STEAM initiative, Learn to Ride, Open Streets, Achieve 225, Village Heartbeat and REACH are all Recreation Center programs.
- Sr. Services
 - Using UNCC graduate students in 7 facilities to teach exercise classes and quarterly health assessments.
- Sports
 - Create lifelong athletes
- Fitness
 - Increase the availability of fitness and wellness programs. Partner with UNCC to hire graduate students to teach fitness classes in our recreation centers as well as our Sr. Centers. Expand staff training
- Grady Cole/Memorial Stadium
 - Become a member of the International Association of Venue Managers.
- Therapeutic Recreation
 - Received a \$25,000 grant from NRPA to build a tiny sensory house.
- Teens
 - Terri is the chair of the Juvenile Crime Commission. Expand the Rec. Employment Core and the Meck Teen programs.
- Budget
 - Maximize money before asking for more.
- Training and Retention of Staff
 - Hire the best and offer training and professional growth opportunities. Listen and address employee climate survey responses.
- Relevant
 - Remain relevant, be in the community and deliver the best for the citizens of Mecklenburg County.

The presentation can be viewed here: [CRCS Vision for the Future](#)

Park and Recreation Commission Priorities

Adequate Funding: New Fees and Charges Proposal

Prior to the PRC meeting, Mario Chang, Sr. Fiscal Administrator, met with the PRC Fees and Charges subcommittee (Commissioners Peter Engels – Chair, Brian Cox, Heidi Pruess, Sterling Martin and Blanche Penn) along with staff (James Alsop, Preston Buckman, Greg Clemmer and Michael Kirschman) to review two proposals:

1. Adopt the same rental fee for several large indoor shelters of similar size and amenities. The overriding goal is to improve customer service and experience by eliminating marginal price differences between shelters.
2. Amend the Sportsplex Stadium rental fee to recognize:
 - a. Increased seating capacity – 2,538 to 4,150 seats
 - b. Higher cost of event supplies and staffing
 - c. Add event rental period of 4 – 8 hours

The proposed fee packages are deemed reasonable for the quality and desirability of a natural turf stadium field and amenities.

The subcommittee approved the proposed changes and the presentation was then made to the full board of the Park and Recreation Commission. Following discussion:

Motion was made by Commissioner Cox to approved the changes to the fees and charges as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnette and approved unanimously.

Both request will be reviewed by the County Manager’s office prior to BOCC approval with a target effective date of January 1, 2018. Details regarding these changes can be viewed here: [Fees and Charges for Indoor Shelters and Sportsplex Stadium](#)

Land Preservation – Erosion

Commissioner Pruess reported that the PRC Executive Team, discussed a topic recommendation to be reported on by staff and determined that they would like for staff to prepare a 20-minute presentation for a future PRC meeting on the topic of erosion that will include:

- What is erosion and why does it matter? Review the different types of erosion currently on all park lands (athletic fields, trails, lake shore, nature preserves, disc golf courses and greenways).
- Discuss solutions that staff have been using and review potential strategies that could be used in the future.

Director Garges suggested another topic of “Stream Restoration” to bring before the PRC. County and City Storm Water make an impressive presentation on this topic.

Active Community Engagement – On The Table – A Knight Foundation Citizen Event

On The Table is a community-wide civic engagement initiative that will take place throughout Charlotte on October 25, 2017. Organized by Community Building Initiative and supported by the Foundation for the Carolinas and the Knight Foundation, this initiative seeks to bring all voices to the table, focusing on a common theme specific to our community. The Park and Recreation Department, led by Terri Stowers, Division Director of Community and Recreation Center Services, will host two On The Table opportunities:

Coffee and Conversations
Tyvola Senior Center
Wednesday, October 25th
8:30 – 10 a.m.

Progress through Parks
Ivory/Baker Recreation Center
Wednesday, October 25th
6:30 – 8 p.m.

More information on this initiative can be viewed here: [About On The Table CLT](#) . Park and Recreation opportunities and registration can be viewed here: [Park and Recreation On The Table](#)

Advisory Council Appointments/Reappointments: None

Director's Report

Director Garges reported the following:

CIP

- FY19 CIP begins July 2018
- Funding for Master Planning of Independence Park Renovations was pushed up from FY19 into FY18. Request for Proposals for the design team will go out soon. Once the design team is selected, the public input process will begin. Independence Park, the oldest park in the park system will have a historic landscape renovation and decisions made on use of Hawthorne Recreation Center.

Discussion followed with the main interest of keeping the PRC informed of the Department's CIP project priority to allow adequate opportunity for PRC to advocate. Director Garges reminded the PRC that there was opportunity every year during the budget cycle to advocate for moving projects up on the 5- year CIP. Jim also encouraged the PRC to always be advocating to our elected officials for the advancement of planning money.

Concern was expressed for the acquisition of sections/connections along greenway projects. Jim assured the PRC that all the parcels required for the FY19-23 greenway projects have been identified and are on the list to acquire.

Concern was expressed regarding the perceived message being received by the community that a greenway project is underway when a dirtway is being constructed. Communication is important as this does not mean that the greenway project is near to construction.

Northern Regional Recreation Center (NRRC)

- Architectural selection interviews have been conducted and design team selected. The project team of Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture and LS3P was selected. The community process should begin in January 2018.

Oak Hills Golf Course

- The Department has purchased the Oak Hills Golf Course property. This 150- acre parcel off of I485 has the potential for a regional park someday. With \$6.5 million per year for

land acquisition, the Department will continue to make land acquisition it's number one priority.

Weekend Events

- Friday – Saturday, Fall Festival at 1st Ward Park
- Saturday – Naming of Renaissance Golf Course after Harry Jones, former County Manger
- Saturday Evening – Nature at Night at McDowell
- Sunday – Open Streets

Drones – Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Mario Chang came before the PRC to advise of plans to allow the public to use small unmanned aircraft systems at the David B. Waymer Aeromodeler Flying Field on Wednesdays and Sundays. The law is allowing for “flying for fun” which is permitted under a special FFA rule that, as long as the activity is for hobby or recreation and in accordance with rules and safety guidelines set by community based organizations (Waymer Aeromodeler Association) flying of unmanned aircraft systems will be allowed.

- Flyers of unmanned aircraft must meet the guidelines of a community based organization (Waymer Aeromodeler Chapter AMA Chapter #69)
- No fees are associated with using the field
- This will give a place to offer people to fly unmanned aircraft when they are found flying on another park property
- CMPD will be notified in cases of privacy violations
- The proposal to allow unmanned aircraft at Waymer is in the hands of County legal. Once approved by legal it will be made public.
- Laws, safety guidelines and basic information regarding Waymer Aeromodeler can be viewed [here](#).

PRC Chair Report:

ERRC Steering Committee Response: Chair Powell reported that she and Commissioner Martin attended the October 3rd Steering Committee meeting of the Eastway Regional Recreation Center. The cost of each of the various components of the facility were provided. One of the attendees noticed that \$10 million was not accounted for and asked for an explanation. Terri Stowers responded that one of the architects did address the concern and explained that the figures provided at the meeting did not include cost of service areas such as storage rooms and boiler room.

Chair Powell also shared the importance of the steering committee being very mindful of truly listening and valuing the ideas of everyone.

PRC BOCC Assignments: Chair Powell pointed out the updated BOCC assignment chart provided in their handouts and reminded them of the importance of meeting with their assigned commissioner to educate on the importance of what Park and Recreation does as well as advocating for specific issues. She asked that they contact her for any assignment changes. The assignments can be viewed [here](#).

Retirement of Jim Garges, Director: Chair Powell spoke kind words regarding Jim Garges and his pending retirement and thanked him for:

- His Authentic Leadership – Leadership Academy and Mentoring

- His Humility – A team leader who valued team members
- His Pursuit of Excellence, always asking “how can we do better?”
- His Genuine Commitment to meeting the Park and Recreation needs now and in the future
- His Kindness, an Eagle Scout through and through.

November 9 PRC Meeting: All were reminded that this date is a change from the original date. The November meeting will be on Thursday, November 9 at 6 p.m. at the West Charlotte Recreation Center.

Consent Items

Motion was made by Commissioner Pruess to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of September 12, 2017, which was seconded by Commissioner McMannis and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

Commissioner Pruess: The Partners for Parks annual awards ceremony is October 11 at 1st Ward Park and tickets are still available.

Commissioner Winiker: Would like to provide feedback to a citizen who expressed concern/interest in recycling in our parks. Deputy Director Michael Kirschman offered to take time to share the Departments experiences, research and challenges concerning recycling in the parks. If necessary, it could be a future PRC agenda item.

Commissioner Johnson: Recycling centers are giving away paper backs for leaves. A potential naming request has been brought to the attention of the Central Region Advisory to name a portion of 3rd Ward Park after Dennis Rash.

Commissioner Martin: Updates on the Athletic AC can be read in the minutes included in the agenda packet. Attended the Hornet’s basketball court dedication at Tuckaseegee and the Monarch Butterfly Festival at 1st Ward Park. Attended the ERRC Steering Committee Meeting at the Charlotte Museum of History.

Director Garges: Expressed appreciation for all the kind words and thanked the Commissioners for all their time and effort.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.